

REMARKS:

I. Introduction

In an Office Action mailed on May 2, 2008, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 5 to 8, 10 to 15, and 18 to 24. The present amendment cancels claim 24, amends claims 1 and 23, and adds no new claims. Accordingly, claims 1, 3, 5 to 8, 10 to 15, and 18 to 23 are now pending in this application.

II. Claim Rejections Pursuant to 35 U.S.C 103

(a) The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 5 to 7, 18 to 21, 23, and 24 pursuant to 35 U.S.C 103(a) as unpatentable over **Mickelson** (US 3,949,524) in view of **Grigi** (EP 0 842 599) and **Anderson** (US 5,397,382).

Mickelson discloses a planter having an enclosure (11) and a tray (21) attached to the bottom of the enclosure (11). The tray (21) has a projection (22) that is a truncated cone and extends through a hole (17) in the bottom panel (16) of the (enclosure). The tray (21) also has a plurality of projections (20) that snap-lock into openings (18) of the enclosure (11) to secure the tray to the enclosure (11). To attach the tray (21) to the bottom of the enclosure (11), the tray projection (22) is through the enclosure bottom panel hole (17) with enough force to deflect the projections (20) radially outwardly to pass over the bottom edge of the enclosure. When the projections (20) reach the openings (18), the projections (20) resiliently snap into the openings (20) to secure the tray (21) to the enclosure (11). If the protrusions (20) are not circumferentially aligned with the openings (18) the tray is rotated relative to the enclosure until the protrusions (20) are not circumferentially aligned with the openings (18) and the projections (20) resiliently snap into the openings (20) to secure the tray (21) to the enclosure (11). In an axial snap-lock connection such as this, rotational movement is not required for engagement or disengagement of the connection. Only an axial force is required to engage and disengage the connection. Rotational movement has only an auxiliary function in helping to find the correct position for the connection when not properly aligned.

Grigi discloses a planter (1) having a pot (2) and a tray (3) attached to the bottom of the (2). The bottom of the pot (2) has a truncated cone (12) and into which extends a tube (18) from the bottom of the tray (3) which forms an air passage (21). The cone (12) is provided with openings (16) so that the interior of the pot (2) is in communication with the air passage (21) of the tube (18). The bottom of the tray (3) is also provided with three hook-like projections

(24) that snap-lock into the openings (16) to secure the tray (3) to the pot (2). To attach the tray (3) to the bottom of the pot (2), the components are axially brought together with enough force to deflect the projections (24) radially inwardly to pass over the bottom edge of the cone (12). When the projections (24) reach the openings (16), the projections (24) resiliently snap into the openings (16) to secure the tray (3) to the pot (2). If the protrusions (24) are not circumferentially aligned with the openings (16) the tray is rotated relative to the pot until the protrusions (24) are circumferentially aligned with the openings (16) and the projections (24) resiliently snap into the openings (16) to secure the tray (3) to the pot (2). In an axial snap-lock connection such as this, rotational movement is not required for engagement or disengagement of the connection. Only an axial force is required to engage and disengage the connection. Rotational movement has only an auxiliary function in helping to find the correct position for the connection when not properly aligned.

Anderson discloses a bio regenerating air filter (10) having a pot (11) supported by a base (12). The pot is closed at its lower end to retain water therein. The base houses an electric motor (37) and fan (40) to provide the flow of air through the pot (11). Anderson states that the pot (11) can simply rest on the base (12) and be held in place by its weight or can engage the base with a bayonet-type joint. Anderson does not illustrate or describe the bayonet-type joint.

The present invention has a dome (8) of the pot (1) and a dome (14) of the coaster (2) forming guide surfaces (9, 16) tapering in conical shape. These guide surfaces contact each other to permit uniform guidance contact over the entire area so that the coaster and pot are both aligned and parallel. That is, they are rotationally aligned so that the coupling connection can be established by a mutual twisting of the parts. Mickelson discloses a single cone which engages an opening in a wall. While this may center the tray, it does not also align the tray parallel to the pot (the cone can pivot in the opening). Grigi discloses a single cone on the pot which engages hook projections. While this may center the tray, it does not also align the tray parallel to the pot (the cone can pivot in the opening). Anderson has no cone elements.

The present invention also has coupling elements (11, 15) that form a bayonet-type coupling connection so that the coaster (2) and the pot (1) are attached via relative rotational movement about the central axis. In the bayonet-type coupling connection, rotational movement is required in order to engage and disengage the connection. In an axial snap-lock

connection such as that disclosed by Mickelson and Grigi, axial pressure created by plant roots extending into the holes and onto the coaster can push the coaster off. A bayonet-type connection about the central axis ensures that this does not happen because it requires rotational movement to engage and disengage the connection. The bayonet-type connection engages the connection at a right angle to the root pressure. Also, the bayonet-type connection requires relatively low engagement and disengagement forces relative to the snap-lock connection.

While Anderson indicates that a bayonet-type joint can be used between the pot and the base, no details of the joint are provided. Additionally, Anderson does not provide the deficiencies of Mickelson and Grigi (contacting conical guide surfaces).

Independent claim 1, and claims dependent therefrom, are allowable because they each require "wherein the guide surface of the coaster is engaged the guide surface of the pot so that the central axis of symmetry of the coaster is aligned and parallel with the central axis of symmetry of the pot and the coaster is rotatable relative to the pot about the central axis of symmetry of the pot" and "wherein the coupling elements (11, 15) form a bayonet-type coupling connection so that the coaster (2) and the pot (1) are attached via rotational movement of the coaster relative to the pot about the central axis of symmetry of the pot." No prior art of record discloses or reasonably suggests the present invention as now claimed by independent claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

(b) The Examiner rejected claims 8, 10 to 12, and 22 pursuant to 35 U.S.C 103(a) as unpatentable over **Mickelson** (US 3,949,524) in view of **Grigi** (EP 0 842 599) and **Anderson** (US 5,397,382) and further in view of **Wells** (US 1,391,353).

Claims 8 to 12 are allowable as depending from allowable independent claim 1 as discussed above and also independently allowable for novel and nonobvious matter therein. It is noted that Wells does not make up for the deficiencies of Mickelson, Grigi and Anderson. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

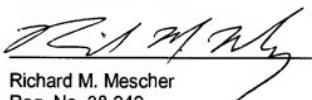
(c) The Examiner rejected claims 13 to 15 pursuant to 35 U.S.C 103(a) as unpatentable over **Mickelson** (US 3,949,524) in view of **Grigi** (EP 0 842 599) and **Anderson** (US 5,397,382) and further in view of **Wells** (US 1,391,353) and further in view of **Kay** (US 4,315,382).

Claims 13 to 15 are allowable as depending from allowable independent claim 1 as discussed above and also independently allowable for novel and nonobvious matter therein. It is noted that Wells does not make up for the deficiencies of Mickelson, Grigi, Anderson, and Wells. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

III. Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is found that that the present amendment does not place the application in a condition for allowance, Applicant's undersigned attorney requests that the Examiner initiate a telephone interview to expedite prosecution of the application. If there are any fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 50-3915.

Respectfully submitted,



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